

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 5: General Case Management	Effective Date: April 1, 2012
	Section 7: Child and Family Team Meetings	Version: 4

POLICY [REVISED]

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will facilitate the Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting process with every family at critical junctures throughout the life of the case beginning in the assessment phase and continuing through all case type closures. The CFT Meeting is a process and the composition of the team should continue to be expanded based on the needs of the family. The CFT Meeting model is a shared decision-making model and is a strength-based approach to assist with the initial and ongoing assessments of children and their families. The CFT Meeting process includes gathering formal and informal supports to achieve the goals identified by the family. This process will allow DCS to hear and understand the family's voice and to assist families with building a support system that will remain in place after the DCS assessment or case has closed.

[NEW] To assist families with achieving their goals, the most effective teams will always consist of at least one (1) or more formal or informal supports identified by the family. This strategy of team building will enable informal supports to continue assisting the family well after the exit of DCS and other formal supports. If formal or informal supports are not included on the team, the reason for this lack of team formation must be staffed with the FCM's supervisor. Efforts should always be made to meet the logistical needs of the family, including the time and location of the CFT Meeting. Throughout the life of a case, DCS will continuously work toward the engagement of the family in the CFT Meeting process.

DCS will utilize CFT Meetings to create plans for assessment, safety, service delivery, and permanency. A CFT Meeting may fulfill the requirement to hold a Case Plan Conference if all required parties are present. If a family chooses not to participate in the CFT Meeting process, a Case Plan Conference must be held to develop the Case Plan (SF 2956/DCS 0046). If the membership of the CFT does not include the resource parent or the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)/Guardian ad Litem (GAL), who are mandatory parties to the development of the Case Plan (SF 2956/DCS 0046), a Case Plan Conference must be held in addition to the CFT Meeting. See separate policy [5.8 Developing the Case Plan](#).

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will engage members of the CFT regarding the need for a CFT Meeting when critical junctures occur in the life of the case, including but not limited to:

1. Assessing the need for and/or preventing removals;
2. Development of the Case Plan;
3. Revising permanency goals prior to court;
4. Safety and service planning;
5. Exploring or changing placement options;
6. Request of any team member; and

7. Case closure.

Code References

1. [IC 31-34-15-5 Cooperation in development of plan](#)
2. 45 CFR 1356.21(g) Case plan requirements

PROCEDURE

For cases where domestic violence has been identified, the FCM will:

1. Assess whether holding a CFT meeting with both parents present can be accomplished safely. See Practice Guidance;
2. Seek Supervisory input when determining how to involve the alleged domestic violence offender in the teaming process;
3. Consider other options for having the alleged domestic violence offender involved in the meeting without being physically present if there are safety concerns; and
4. Include a domestic violence advocate or another domestic violence service provider(s) in meetings whenever possible.

[REVISED] Note: If a CFT Meeting is held with both the parent alleged to be the victim of domestic violence and the alleged domestic violence offender present, a plan should be created during the CFT preparation meeting to address safety before, during, and after the meeting. This may include, but is not limited to: having the parent alleged to be the victim of domestic violence and alleged domestic violence offender arrive and leave the meeting at different times; having scheduled breaks throughout the meeting to evaluate the safety of all team members; etc. See [5.A Tool-Domestic Violence and CFT Meeting Considerations](#).

The FCM will:

1. **[REVISED]** Utilize the preparation meeting to explain the CFT process to the parent(s), guardian, or custodian(s), child (when appropriate), and other team members. Document that this information has been provided to families;
2. Utilize the [SF 54341 Authorization to Contact Child and Family Team Meeting \(CFTM\) Members](#) form to determine the list of members to be included in the CFT;

Note: The family should select all CFT members, with the exception of DCS staff.

3. Encourage the parent, guardian, or custodian to include the relative placement, foster parent, and Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) or Guardian ad Litem (GAL) as members of the CFT by explaining the benefits to case planning;
4. Send a [SF 54338 Confirmation Notice of a Child and Family Team Meeting \(CFTM\)](#) to all team members to notify them of an upcoming meeting;
5. Coordinate and implement the CFT Meetings following the [Family Team Meeting Agenda](#);
6. Ensure that all CFT members sign a [SF 54339 Child and Family Team Meeting \(CFTM\) Attendance and Confidentiality for Limited Use of Agreement for Access to Confidential Department of Child Services Client/Case Information](#) and the family understands the limits of the confidentiality of team members;

[REVISED] Note: Individuals who have not signed the form may not participate in a CFT Meeting or receive a copy of the CFT Meeting notes. Individuals are required to sign the form each time they attend a CFT Meeting.

7. Gather essential family and community connections to document in the GenoPro software;
8. Ensure that individualized plans based on the family's personal goals are developed during the CFT Meeting to connect the family with the appropriate services and resources;
9. Complete CFT Meeting notes. The Family Story is not included in the notes. If a safety concern is raised during the Family Story, a 'Contact' titled, "family story" must be entered in the Indiana Child Welfare Information System and the information about the safety concern must be entered;

[REVISED] Note: All CFT Meeting notes must include a current [Safety Plan \(SF 51455/CW 0440\)](#) which includes the child's current level of safety in placement, visitation, school, etc.

10. Ensure the CFT Meeting notes are distributed to all appropriate parties and entered in the Indiana Child Welfare Information System within seven (7) calendar days of the CFT Meeting;

[REVISED] Note: Distribute CFT Meeting notes to the CASA/GAL if they were not included as part of the CFT. They do not need to request the notes, they must be sent automatically as they are a party to the case.

11. Submit all CFT Meeting notes with each [Progress Report \(PermRptR1070108\)](#) to the court;
12. **[REVISED]** Contact the parent alleged to be a victim of domestic violence within 24 hours after the CFT Meeting, if domestic violence has been identified as a risk factor for the family and both parents were present at the CFT Meeting; and

[REVISED] Note: This contact will allow the FCM to assess any impact the CFT Meeting may have had on the parent alleged to be the victim of domestic violence and the child's safety. See for more information.

13. **[NEW]** Contact a supervisor, Peer Coach or Peer Coach Consultant for assistance with all families who agree to have a CFT Meeting but cannot identify informal or formal supports to form a team. If formal or informal supports are not included on the team, the reason for this lack of team formation must be staffed with the FCM's supervisor.

[REVISED] The Supervisor will assist the FCM in creating a plan that addresses safety before, during, and after the CFT Meeting when a CFT Meeting is held with both the parent alleged to be the victim of domestic violence and alleged domestic violence offender present.

Note: For additional information regarding the role of the Supervisor, see Case Practice Reform Goals and Expectations for Supervisors at the [Indiana Practice Model SharePoint](#).

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

[NEW] Preparation Meeting

This is the critical first step in the CFT Meeting process to engage the family and other team members with details about the CFT Meeting process. During this meeting, the FCM should obtain a list of potential team members and make a list of goals identified by the family for a safe/sustainable permanency plan. After team members have been identified and have agreed to participate in the CFT meeting, the facilitator must also schedule a preparation meeting with these team members to describe for the CFT meeting process. Preparation of team members is not a onetime event, but should happen consistently throughout the life of a case or the family's involvement with DCS.

The preparation interview enables team members to participate and contribute fully by helping the family:

1. Focus on strengths as well as needs;
2. Identify the goals the team member would like to see accomplished at the CFT meeting;
3. Explore any potential conflicts and discover ways to manage emotions positively; and
4. Determine what the team members need to participate in a positive way.

[REVISED] Domestic Violence and CFT Meetings

Due to the extreme power and control that one partner typically exhibits in a relationship where domestic violence is present, it may be unsafe and/or unproductive to have both the parent alleged to be the victim of domestic violence and alleged domestic violence offender present at the same CFT Meeting.

Reasons why a joint meeting would be inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

1. The parent alleged to be the victim of domestic violence does not want a meeting because he or she feels that they or the child would be in danger;
2. The parent alleged to be the victim of domestic violence does not want a meeting because he or she feels intimidated and therefore unable to represent what they feel is in the child's best interest;
3. The parent alleged to be the victim of domestic violence has secured a "no contact order" and the CFT Meeting would be a violation of the order;

Note: If it has been determined that is in the best interest of the family, DCS may request the court to lift the "no contact order" during the time of the meeting.

4. **[REVISED]** The alleged domestic violence offender denies that DV is an issue or that DV has not occurred when evidence states otherwise (i.e. police reports, visible bruises, etc.);
5. **[REVISED]** The FCM believes the parent alleged to be the victim of domestic violence or the child could be placed in danger if the meeting took place; or
6. **[REVISED]** The family of the parent alleged to be the victim of domestic violence or the alleged domestic violence offender either denies or enables the abuse.

[REVISED] Note: It may initially be inappropriate to have the parent alleged to be the victim of domestic violence and alleged domestic violence offender attend the same CFT Meeting. Prior to each meeting DCS should evaluate the option of having the parent alleged to be a

victim of domestic violence and alleged domestic violence offender attend the same CFT Meeting. Other options may be considered, such as a conference call with the alleged domestic violence offender. If there is a court order in place, permission can be sought from the court for the alleged domestic violence offender to be on the phone for a CFT Meeting. See [Tool 5.A: Domestic Violence and CFT Meeting Considerations](#) for more information.

[NEW] Building Informal Supports

1. **Location:** Families may identify a potential informal support but are concerned they may not be able to be physically present at the CFT Meeting. We should encourage these informal supports to participate via conference call or speakerphone. Efforts should always be made to accommodate the best time and location for the family and the identified informal supports.
2. **Situation:** Families may not invite someone because they feel the person already has too much going on, or they are too busy, or because there is a strained relationship. DCS should encourage families to invite these informal supports regardless of what their schedule might be or what has occurred in the past.

[NEW] Questions to Assist Family in Selection of Team Members:

1. Who do you list as an emergency contact on the school paperwork for your children?
2. Who do you list as an emergency contact person for yourself?
3. Whom would you trust to make decisions for you if you could not do this for yourself?
4. Who would you want to care for your child if you could not care for them?
5. Name the activities in which your children are involved. Who are the people at those activities who you find to be helpful? (Church, Missions, Sports, School, YMCA, Big Brothers/Sisters, Mentors, etc.)

Resolving Potential Differences (Addressing Potential Conflicts)¹

When potential differences arise while facilitating a CFT Meeting, the facilitator(s) should assess and decide if all family and team members should discuss the issue or differences. To make this decision some questions to consider are:

1. Does the issue or difference involve the whole team?
2. How might this issue or difference influence the development and implementation of the family's plan?
3. Does this issue or difference impact the ability of the team or family to assure safety, well being and permanency for the child?

The goals and requests of the parent(s) must never come before ensuring the safety of the child.

[NEW] For additional practice support, see [Indiana Practice Model SharePoint](#).

FORMS AND TOOLS

¹ The Child Welfare Policy & Practice Group, *Engagement and Facilitating the Child and Family Team Meetings*

1. [SF 54338 Confirmation Notice of a Child and Family Team Meeting \(CFTM\)](#) – Spanish Version Available at [http://intranet.dcs.in.gov/Pages/ChildandFamilyTeamMeeting\(CFTM\).aspx](http://intranet.dcs.in.gov/Pages/ChildandFamilyTeamMeeting(CFTM).aspx)
2. [SF 54341 Authorization to Contact Child and Family Team Meeting \(CFTM\) Members](#) – Spanish Version Available at [http://intranet.dcs.in.gov/Pages/ChildandFamilyTeamMeeting\(CFTM\).aspx](http://intranet.dcs.in.gov/Pages/ChildandFamilyTeamMeeting(CFTM).aspx)
3. [SF 54339 Child and Family Team Meeting \(CFTM\) Attendance and Confidentiality for Limited Use of Agreement for Access to Confidential Department of Child Services Client/Case Information](#) – Spanish Version Available at [http://intranet.dcs.in.gov/Pages/ChildandFamilyTeamMeeting\(CFTM\).aspx](http://intranet.dcs.in.gov/Pages/ChildandFamilyTeamMeeting(CFTM).aspx)
4. [Family Team Meeting Agenda](#)
5. [SF 54600 Child and Family Team Meeting Facilitator Debrief/Feedback](#)
6. [SF 54601 Child and Family Team Meeting Notes](#)
7. [5.A Tool-Domestic Violence and CFT Meeting Considerations](#)
8. Case Plan (SF 2956/DCS 0046) – Available in Management Gateway for Indiana’s Kids (MaGIK)
9. [Safety Plan \(SF 51455/CW 0440\)](#)
10. GenoPro Software
11. [Family Network Diagram Guide](#)
12. Progress Report (PermRptR1070108)

RELATED INFORMATION

N/A